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Evaluating Applicants

Cooperative Homefinding

Child with "Two Mothers"

Foster Care Tax Deductions

CHILD WELFARE JOURNAL OF THE CHILD WELFARE LEAGUE OF AMERICA, Inc

HENRIETTA L. GORDON, Editor

CHILD WELFARE is a forum for discussion in print of child welfare problems and the programs and skills needed to solve them. Endorsement does not necessarily go with the printing of opinions expressed over a signature.

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EVALUATING ADOPTIVE APPLICANTS*

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Recognizing the broad scope of responsibility carried by caseworkers in the field of adoption, the author suggests a method for evaluating adoptive applicants which may enable the caseworker to arrive at a more dynamic understanding of their personality and motivations in applying to adopt a child.

WE STILL KNOW LITTLE about the dynamics of childlessness, the real motivation behind the wish to adopt and the significance of adoption for both parent and child. Answers to these questions are important in the decisions which social workers in the field of adoption must make. The task of the psychiatric consultant is, therefore, to assist the worker in arriving at a deeper understanding of the parents who apply for the child, the child who needs adoption, as well as the worker who is doing the study.

This paper is limited to a discussion of the evaluation of the adoptive parents. The ideal goal of a good social history is to bring out vividly and understandably the feelings and motives of the applicant. To understand the emotional problems involved does not mean that it is necessary to have some clever, isolated intuition of some psychoanalytic mechanisms described in literature, but rather such a grasp of an emotional situation that the reactions of the person involved become simply and humanly understandable.

In adoption service, the particularly important factors to be concerned about are the capacity of the couple to give love and to provide a proper parental image. Once the true motivations for adoption are understood, the task is a comparatively easy one, and the conclusions are evident.

For example, a woman absorbed in a hostile conflict with her mother is not likely to give warmth to a child. A man engaged in competitive struggle with his brother will at

one time or another be unable to control competitive strivings with his son. A wife so starved for love that she needs all that her husband can give will have little left to give to a child and may begrudge the husband's attention to the child.

A critical examination of the history is based on the interpretation of selected samples of the material from which the personality pattern emerges. This requires a disciplined approach and the exercise of judgment. The dynamic interpretation made on the basis of isolated sections of history provide only tentative conclusions when considered by themselves. When considered in toto, they provide a reliable basis for prediction.

History Taking

The history does not necessarily have to be very lengthy and detailed in all respects, but a detailed sampling of certain aspects of behavior can be extremely helpful in that it enables us to make finer observations and draw the necessary conclusions. Often one can get a more reliable picture if the wife is being interrogated separately, and in many instances the family doctor can furnish valuable additional information.

One of the major deficiencies frequently encountered in histories is the almost complete absence of a sexual history. While it is true that some applicants may be so inhibited in matters of sex that little information is obtained even upon skillful and tactful questioning, most adoptive parents are quite willing to disclose pertinent data pertaining to their sex life.

The investigation regarding sterility requires perhaps greater skill than any other part of the study. This, too, can be acquired.

* Excerpted from a paper entitled "Helping the Caseworker Understand Adoptive Applicants," presented at Child Welfare League Section, National Conference of Social Work, Atlantic City, N. J., May, 1954.

A brief review of common reactions to sterility may facilitate understanding of the purpose of this part of the history:

- (1) The normal reaction to news of sterility is usually shock, feelings of inferiority, concern over one's own intactness, doubt about one's own masculinity or femininity, concern with security of marriage, guilt toward and compassion with spouse.
- (2) This is later followed by a wish to correct the situation by talking things over and working them out with the help of the spouse, advisers, priest or psychiatrist. In case of organic sterility, there is gradual resignation to the fact that one will not propagate one's own. Feelings of inferiority are alleviated by restored confidence in functional potency, by a wish and hope that one can satisfy the partner emotionally, by a recognition that sex and child are not the same.
- (3) Finally there is renewed interest in the wish for a child. The compensatory wish to give to and to

rear a child has become stronger. The idea that if one cannot create a child one can contribute to his growth and development, then becomes a major source of satisfaction.

The possibilities for pathological resolutions in response to sterility are too numerous to discuss here. People habitually react to trauma and frustration according to their own established patterns such as by becoming angry, withdrawn, by projecting or acting-out. Thus, one may find rage attacks, severe depression, extramarital acting-out or many other forms of neurotic behavior, all of which certainly would make such parents unsuitable for adoption. Equally suggestive of personality disturbance would be an apparent absence of emotional reaction or an unusually rapid recovery from the trauma.

A HISTORY OF A PROSPECTIVE ADOPTIVE FATHER

Mr. B.—married 2½ years. Age 32.

Selected Data

Tall, well-groomed, self-conscious brewery worker, has ambition to own a farm.

Has a stutter which is marked when he talks about mother or childhood but which is absent when he discusses wife or job. Stutter started at 13. "Mother always yelled at us kids, cuffed us across the head."

Father punished him for disobeying mother, strapped him.

Stuttered only early in marriage.

Account of his own and mother's accidents in childhood followed by his statement regarding adoption: "If child has accident or gets sick, I'll be calm."

As a child was insecure and perfectionistic. Approached tasks only if assured of success, expected to be cuffed or strapped if failed.

Tentative Conclusions

Self-consciousness suggests personality maladjustment. The emphasis upon grooming by a self-conscious person who is expected to play an aggressive role may be an indication of conflict in the area of aggressivity.

Thoughts and feelings related to mother and childhood are highly charged. The stuttering is in reaction to mother's angry and punitive outbursts and probably represents an inhibition of the impulse to fight back, an abortive yelling back at her. Since the stuttering started at puberty, sexual awakening and corresponding fears may be contributing factors. In addition, the fact that mother cuffed him in the region of the head may explain why stuttering occurred.

Father's punishment was indirect and in response to mother's anger. This suggests a matriarchal family constellation in which applicant received no support from father, who himself was intimidated by mother. Two disciplinarians had to be reckoned with.

The disappearance of stuttering early in marriage permits the conclusion that the anticipated "yelling attack" by wife did not materialize. Thus, in his relationship with his wife the inhibiting defense of stuttering became unnecessary.

Detailed account of accidents in childhood; later in the history reference to calmness in discussing possible accident or illness of child reveals his anxiety related to physical injury and fears of bodily harm (to self or others), and denial of the anxiety.

Aspirations are motivated by fear of punishment for failure. Achievement to him means "not to fail." The compulsive handling of tasks insulates him against the anxieties of possible failure.

Several jobs with brewing companies. Proud to clean vats. Night shift voluntarily.

First marriage in service 1943. Wife never lived with him, she was dating sailors. Divorce 1946. "I made a mistake, that's all."

While in service, three months in hospital with abdominal pain, organicity ruled out. Told by psychiatrist did not want to go overseas.

Careful to avoid arguments with mother.

Brother, Fred, two years younger, is mother's favorite, knows how to handle her, is married, has two children.

When patient was 11, mother told friends "this is our sissy."

Joe, four years younger, had spinal meningitis as a child, less successful.

Present marriage: "There ain't no yelling, we work as a team."

Sex: "Satisfied. I work from 11 P.M. 'til 7 A.M., can do it any time."

Worried what to tell the child, thought best to tell the truth: "that there was something physically wrong with him and that he was unable to make mother pregnant."

Ideas about child-rearing: "Mothers jam bottle in and out of baby's mouth and yell at baby. Child would get nervous stomach and stutter."

Summary of Interpretive Impressions

One is immediately struck by his preoccupation with the theme of the vocally angry mother. This apparently has been a problem all his life, and at present he is still struggling to find a solution. His total adaptation to life is centered around this issue.

The means employed in this attempt at adaptation are inadequate and crippling to his personality. He attempts to avoid angry outbursts of the woman by appeasement and

The type of jobs sought are those in which success is assured. A façade of pride in menial tasks masks the anxieties of self-deception. Night employment preference indicates the wish to escape from social obligations or striving.

Casual, contemptuous reference to first marriage indicates that he married in passive compliance with social demands. His choice of a promiscuous woman with whom he never lived appears to indicate lack of heterosexual motivation.

Evidence of emotional difficulties in service. Tendency to somatize anxiety.

Still afraid of mother.

Sibling rivalry suggested, brother is mother's favorite and also virile enough to have children of his own.

Mother rejects him as a boy. This discouraged him from asserting his masculinity.

(No just basis for inference about this entity.)

Most important that wife does not yell. Peace at all cost.

Masculine strivings may be unconsummated in overt behavior (works nights, sleeps days).

An adopted child is not concerned with the cause of sterility of the adoptive parents. This volunteering to present himself as impotent is an indication of guilt (masochism) as well as a depreciation of women and pregnancy (note phrase "make mother pregnant").

This reflects a highly charged identification with the baby to be adopted and its anticipated fate. He re-experiences the painful feeding memories associated with mother's behavior (yelling) and his own protective stuttering.

submission (character defense). The wish to yell back at the angry mother was inhibited by fear, and the resulting frustration expressed in stuttering (inhibited verbal aggression as a neurotic symptom). The inhibition of this impulse does not absorb all of Mr. B.'s guilt. This preoccupation with injury indicates that he expects further punishment for his angry feelings toward mother. Vindictive feelings and fear of women caused serious disturbance in his sexual adjustment.

Although overtly boisterous and supposedly self-assured in matters of sex, he is dominated by anger and fear, and thus unconsciously unwilling and unable to gratify the woman sexually.

This inhibition of aggression has spread into the work area. He is compelled to seek out simple tasks in which he is assured of success. Success means "not to fail," thus not engendering mother's disapproval.

He has received little help from father, who himself feared mother, and added his punishment to that of mother. Thus lack of

identification with a strong father increased his difficulties in defending himself against a punitive mother.

In his current marriage he has attained a precarious equilibrium and a self-deceptive feeling of security. Since his wife does not yell at him, there is no need to stutter. Since his wife is not sexually demanding, and is satisfied with his nightly work habits, he does not feel threatened or challenged as a man. Beneath the façade there continues with unabated intensity fear of and anger with the potentially punitive woman.

A HISTORY OF A PROSPECTIVE ADOPTIVE MOTHER

Mrs. B.—Age 30.

Selected Data

Fearful and anxious, less well-groomed than husband.

Heavily sobbed while talking about her father.

Learned from father when she was 12 that person she thought was her mother was really her stepmother, and that her mother had died a few days after she was born of blood poisoning. Father had remarried when she was four. She feels that father blames her for mother's death.

She believes her parents' marriage was a shotgun affair. She was told that her father did not want to get married but had to.

The sister, five years younger, from father's second marriage, Mrs. B. felt, was preferred by both parents. She recalls thinking that sister would not be brought home from christening.

Father was unemployed and at home during Mrs. B.'s early childhood (depression). Mrs. B. afraid of him. He prohibited her dating, criticized her and failed to answer many of her questions.

Grandmother was warm and giving, stepmother kind and understanding. The latter would never interfere with the disciplining of Mrs. B. by father.

Tentative Conclusions

Anxiety and fear indicate imbalance in current behavior. Neglect of grooming may be a corollary of this imbalance, or a protest against femininity.

Conflict centers around father. Her emotional outburst indicates that it is currently alive.

Confronted with the news that her mother had died in giving birth to her, she could have developed two fantasies:

a. Guilty self-accusation of having killed her mother. b. Fantasy of father having caused mother's death (by impregnating her).

Both of these fantasies were enhanced by learning of mother's death at a period of her development (puberty) during which her own sexual and competitive urges were awakened.

Furthermore, she must have wondered why her parents had not told her sooner, and must have concluded purposeful deception by both parents. She may have especially resented stepmother's usurping mother's place.

Father did not love mother and is only a sexual brute. The implication of the shotgun wedding further suggests that she was an unwanted child; that she was an "imp-child" and that she must wear the "scarlet letter" to expiate the guilt of her parents.

The preference of the younger sister could have given rise to sibling rivalry. Her memory in the christening episode may imply a concealed wish to get rid of her sister.

Because father was home, she was exposed to his influence much more than had he been working. His hypocritical, punitive and possessive attitude served to augment her feeling of worthlessness and self-reproach. Because father had such a restricting hold on her, she became inhibited and fearful in relating to other men.

She turned toward women for warmth and found some acceptance. However, there is a silent reproach of stepmother for not having protected her from father.

Had few dates and was afraid of dates. Had her first date at 19. Entered marriage "adequately prepared." Her married sister had told her "what to expect."

Likes knitting. Was Grey Lady for several years. Worked in Civil Defense as airplane spotter. Trying to develop hobby of growing miniature trees.

Knows what is meant to love and care for a child not her own. Her stepmother has fully accepted her as her own daughter.

After learning they were unable to have their own child, she told her husband she was sorry, that this made no difference. It might have been the other way, that she might not have been able to give him a child.

Summary of Interpretive Impressions

A motive most apparent in this woman's history is the repeated expression of sexual fears.

The memory of father's disclosure, when she was 12, that mother had died in childbirth is highly charged. Of the two fantasies suggested as underlying the death of her mother the one related to father having caused her death by impregnating mother seems most strongly charged for the following reasons:

1. Her impression of father not wanting to marry mother, wanting to use her for sex only.
2. Her fear and resentment of father in earlier years.
3. Her sporadic dating and expressed fear of boys.
4. The implied reference to the dangers of sex and marriage and her interpretation of sex information received (what to expect).
5. The absence of dissatisfaction with husband's working nights and his lack of availability for sharing of marital experiences and the apparent acceptance of his impotence with little protest.

Thus, her life pattern appears to be predominantly centered around a fantasy that men, by their sexual desires, ruin women. Other themes, such as her resentful feelings toward sister and stepmother, are apparent, but dynamically less charged and almost totally obscured in the more pervasive and

The lack of dates and the overtly expressed fear of boys as well as the phrasing "what to expect" (meaning the worst) suggests fear of sexual involvement. Her emphasis on adequate preparation may be a frantic attempt to deny ignorance and fears related to marriage.

Restless activity, playing ill-defined roles, rushing from one thing to another. This need to keep herself busy suggests avoidance of involvement in personal relationships. She is running away from something.

Until the age of 12, she did not know that she was not stepmother's own child. Thus her alleged familiarity with the feelings of an adopted child must have been based on strong early unconscious feelings of rejection by stepmother. Her assertion of having been fully accepted by her stepmother conceals a wish for that status.

This attitude may reflect genuine compassion for husband's impotence. Her readiness to assume the blame may also indicate feelings of guilt toward husband, in that it prevents her exposure to feared danger of sex and childbirth.

violent conflict centering around men. She has attempted to overcompensate her lack of feminine desires and resulting guilt by trying to be a "good" mother and wife. The overt anxiety indicates that this defense is inadequate.

Motivations and Predictions

The answers to questions in which we are specifically interested in relation to adoptive work evolve easily from the formulation.

1. Motivation for adoption

It is apparent that Mr. B.'s wish to adopt originates with his need to please and appease his wife. He is apathetic toward having a child, but needs to comply with wife's wish for adoption.

Mrs. B. wants a child as a means of compensating for her feelings of inferiority as a woman. Adopting a child would relieve some of her guilt about not accepting the latter role.

2. Prediction of outcome if child were placed

Mr. B. would be intensely involved in relationship of child with mother, tending to overidentify. As a result, he would lack objectivity toward the child, would have an urgent need to protect him from mother. He would be

a poor object for masculine identification. The child would react to father's underlying fear and hate of women and thus be torn in his loyalty between father and mother.

Mrs. B. would tend to seek security and gratification from the child who is less threatening than the adult.

Mr. and Mrs. B. have in common the need to preserve an illusion of a good marriage. They share the neurotic goal of avoiding, each for reasons of his own, intimate and giving contact. A child

would disturb this neurotic adjustment in the parents, thus creating acute conflict between them.

3. *Decision*

This couple is unsuitable for adoption.

Conclusion

Many of the gaps in our knowledge about adoption can be bridged by close cooperation between psychiatric consultant and social worker. An understanding of motivations for adoption can provide method in the place of reliance on chance for selection of parents.

EXPERIMENT IN COOPERATIVE HOMEFINDING

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This experiment in community-wide homefinding reveals that cooperative homefinding is successful when the participating agencies each give the same type of care to the same kinds of children, almost as though they were one agency. Where different care is offered, a separate homefinding program is required.

BOSTON is a city of traditionalists and of individualists—and in the field of child welfare, we have held to our reputation. Instead of two or at most three child-placing agencies maintained in most cities, we have seven Red Feather and one public agency whose function is the care of children in foster homes. Mergers are discussed periodically, but in the end, tradition and individualism always win. Most of our agencies are well over 100 years old, the oldest dating back to 1800, and there is personal interest on the part of individuals in the community in their particular pet agency whose name has a special meaning to them. For this reason, we have kept our names and our separate headquarters, while at the same time each of us has agreed on a specialized function so that all services to children may be covered. Thus one agency specializes in medical care in foster homes, another in the field of adoption, another in group care, etc., so that the quality of our services is maintained. We believe that a day will come, whether by evolution or revolution, when we

shall unite, but meanwhile our goal is closer cooperation in all areas.

Why Pool Was Needed

In the field of homefinding, there has been a tremendous waste of time and energy, with eight agencies competing for foster homes, many times with duplication of effort in recruiting and studying. In September 1953, five of the child-placing agencies—the Boston Children's Friend Society, the Children's Aid Association, Inc., the Children's Mission to Children, the Church Home Society, and the New England Home for Little Wanderers—decided to pool their homes cooperatively. Each agency agreed to contribute to the pool any foster home not in use when there was no child in prospect for the home, with the understanding that the home would be returned when needed or, if in use, another home of equal value would be substituted by the borrowing agency. This would mean that good foster homes would be kept in use instead of having to wait for children, and

consequently, would be conserved for agency use instead of foster parents finding a child privately or perhaps foster mother deciding to take a job outside the home. It took courage and faith in our fellow homefinders to lend a valuable foster home which might be needed badly later on, but we agreed that it made sense if we were thinking of the welfare of our children and not just the convenience of our particular agency.

Mechanics of Operation

Headquarters for the pool were to be the Children's Aid Association where a small, unofficial attempt already had been made to keep a card index of homes available for joint use. Each agency agreed to send a 3 x 5 card for each foster home to be loaned with information to include:

- a. Name of lending agency.
- b. Name and address of foster parents.
- c. Religion.
- d. Names and ages of children.
- e. Kind of child wanted.
- f. Whether the home had been studied.
- g. Whether used, and if so, a short sentence of evaluation.

If not studied, the borrowing agency took the responsibility for studying and approving or refusing, and the home became the property of the borrowing agency, with the understanding that it would be shared when available. When a home was already studied, the lending agency agreed to make available the foster home record to the agency about to use the home. In return, the borrowing agency agreed to send a written evaluation of the home at the time of the child's leaving.

To give a clear picture of the plan it seems important to describe the mechanics of operation in some detail. In all essentials, the four agencies now involved have the same philosophy, not only in homefinding but also in relationships between the child's caseworker and the foster parent. Our standards of care are equal; our basic board rates are the same—\$10 a week for well babies and for non-problem small children, \$12 for children over 10 years old, with a sliding scale up to \$25

a week for children with special medical or emotional needs. Our home studies contain approximately the same material, and, where there are differences, they are disappearing as our cooperative effort continues. For example, we are in the process of consolidating our application form and our separate manuals for foster parents, which are similar yet differing in certain details.

The Coordinator

All applications are referred to the full-time coordinator for screening unless a homefinder wishes to take a particular application from the beginning. For example, the homefinder of the New England Home for Little Wanderers does her own screening and home studies independently, turning over to the pool applications not needed, and lending homes already studied when not in use. This is because that agency's service is recognized as sufficiently different to require that their own homefinder present that difference to the applicant in the course of the study of the home.

The coordinator is in charge of screening applicants, and of knowing about available homes, as well as schools and other group resources. She takes requests from caseworkers in need of specific homes and makes suggestions as to possible homes available. She has the first office interview, the content of which is largely for the purpose of orienting the applicant to the four agencies. The interview includes a discussion of expressed motive of applicant; the type of child wanted; the general needs of the agencies involved; board rates; a description of the home study; and of the relationship between foster parent and child, own parent, and agency, including the child's caseworker.

Of necessity the coordinator takes an active role in the interview, and if it becomes obvious that the applicant will not be suitable as a foster parent the coordinator tries to help her to withdraw, or may give a definite refusal. If the applicant seems promising, an application form is given at the end of the interview. At present, a Children's

Mission form is given if the applicant is interested in medical care, a Church Home Society form if the applicant is Episcopalian, and a Children's Aid Association form for all others. The common form which we are planning to use eventually will greatly simplify present procedures.

If the coordinator is doubtful as to the value of an applicant she may give or withhold the form, later discussing the applicant with the homefinding supervisor, who assists in making a decision about whether or not to continue the home study. If no study is to be made, a letter is sent to the applicant explaining the reason for not considering the home.

After processing with the Central Index and the Board of Probation, homes ready for study are kept in a folder and selected by or assigned to homefinders for study on the basis of current needs. It is agreed that ideally homes are not studied with a particular child in mind, and pooling our homes is helping us toward this goal. However, realistically, there are still many times when a search is being made for a home for children with special needs, and each homefinder has these children in mind when she is choosing homes for study.

The coordinator has at least two conferences a week with the supervisor, at which both intake interviews and requests for homes needed are discussed. Since the coordinator is in the office at all times, most requests for homes are reported to her by the child's worker, but since it is the responsibility of the supervisor to know the current needs and to try to anticipate general and specific needs, so frequent conferences between her and the coordinator are necessary.

The Homefinders

The homefinding supervisor has weekly conferences with individual homefinders on specific home studies on which they are working, and is responsible for the smooth running of the project in general. When a study is completed and the home approved, a

letter of welcome and approval is written by the homefinder and signed by the executive of her agency, and this agency has prior right to its use. However, if within a month there is no specific child in view for the home, it becomes available for joint use.

One homefinder with a flair for writing has taken as her project publicity, public relations and advertising. Her monthly letters to foster parents have done much to interpret to them the functioning of a child-placing agency, and to make them feel closer to the agency. Last spring she planned a letter-writing contest for foster mothers who wrote stories of their experiences with their foster children (the prize was a new Easter hat), and she is in the process of planning a photograph contest for foster fathers. There was enthusiastic response to the first contest, and incidentally out of it came some good stories for publicity.

The homefinders of the three agencies meet bi-monthly to discuss plans for foster parent meetings and special projects and to share mutual problems. General and specific needs for homes are reported. It is planned later, when time permits, to discuss selected home studies, to evaluate homes in use, and to analyze the reason for their success or failure. This in itself has been helpful, for homefinders are in a field quite apart from the caseworker who is carrying on sustained casework with child and parent, and there is a real need to share thinking with others in the field.

No Ban on Part-time Workers

Many of our homefinders are part-time workers. The usual reluctance on the part of agencies to use part-time workers has been reversed here at Children's Aid Association. The fact that we have been able to continue with the large volume of work and to maintain our standard of care is due to the fact that we are using skilled, experienced social workers who are willing to give part of their time to their profession. Homefinding and adoption lend themselves particularly to the

part-time worker, but, with careful selection of caseloads, we have been able also to make use of the part-time worker in direct casework with children.

It is interesting that, except for the coordinator, all four homefinders are on a part-time basis, working two or three days a week. We find that for these two or three days we can be full of enthusiasm for our job, and the stimulation of meeting bi-monthly to discuss our problems and plans keeps us from falling into the periodic depression which is the occupational disease of homefinders. Three of our homefinders are married women who might have retired from social work long since if they had not been able to work part-time. We believe that mature women with casework experience behind them make the best homefinders, and, moreover, we find that two half-time workers accomplish more than one whole. In these days when there is shortage of skilled staff in all social agencies, the value of using part-time homefinders should not be overlooked.

Foster Parent Meetings

We have had two meetings of foster mothers, and we are planning a series, with foster fathers to be included in some—and perhaps even a meeting for foster fathers alone. There has been staff participation in both meetings already held, and requests have come from Board members to attend future meetings so that they may meet foster parents. The meetings will be small, not more than 20 foster parents at any one meeting, to allow for free discussion and a more intimate social hour. We have had enthusiastic response from foster mothers who attended the first two meetings and this has encouraged us to continue.

The meetings were planned and carried out by the homefinders of the three agencies with staff participation in the program. Our specialist in public relations suggested that at the meeting we present an actual home-finding case, disguising only names and places. Since all the foster mothers invited to

the first two meetings were caring for small babies, we chose the case of a baby of an unmarried mother for presentation. We told the story from the moment of intake until the baby was adopted and the case closed. Our panel of experts included the intake worker, who explained how the mother came to the agency; the caseworker, who told of her work with both mother and baby; the homefinder, who told of the reason for the home study and for the choice of a particular foster home for this particular baby; the worker at the medical clinic, who explained the doctor's role; and the psychologist who told of the testing of the baby before adoption.

Evaluation

The plan is still very much in effect at the present time, after a year and a half, though one agency, the Boston Children's Friend Society, which places only small babies, has found the pool of less value than the other four. The reason for this is that the agency never has an over-supply of baby homes and feels that they would be unable to return any home borrowed. The New England Home for Little Wanderers has been a very active part of the pool, both lending and borrowing homes, and even sharing some already in use. When a home has a child in it, lending is done only with the approval of the caseworker whose child is in the home.

The Children's Aid Association, the Church Home Society and the Children's Mission have become so involved in lending and borrowing that they have now joined their homefinding departments altogether, which has resulted in many advantages for all three. It has meant that special talents can be used for the benefit of all.

We are convinced that we are doing a more adequate job than we could possibly do alone, and the results bear out our belief; for, although intake is at a high level in all three agencies, yet we are not feeling the terrific pressure of having too few good homes, and many times there is a greater choice for a child with special needs.

THE CHILD WITH "TWO MOTHERS,"*

Frieda M. Kuhlmann

Executive Secretary

First Family Day Care Association
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Although foster family day care programs have existed for more than 27 years, generally accepted standards for the service have not been established. In this article, the author attempts to set forth the standards and conditions necessary to provide the service adequately.

OUT OF THEIR awareness of the needs of the individual child, the first program of family day care was organized in Philadelphia in December 1927. Its purpose was to provide for the child who was too young, or who could not benefit from group care for other reasons, the care he needed during the day in a family setting. The standards and practices developed laid the foundation for all subsequent family day care services in the United States.

Family day care was set up as a separate agency at that time, and is at present continuing so to function. The community is now studying the over-all day care picture in three counties—Philadelphia, Montgomery and Delaware. The First Family Day Care Association is actively cooperating on this in order to determine how its services can best be offered in the future.

Setting Standards

Since no previous pattern existed, family day care has gone through a slow process of trial and error. During World War II, Federal aid was given to group day care only. This fact often led the community to think that family day care was unessential. Further confusion was created because professional people either thought family day care was totally different from full-time foster care, or decided they were exactly alike. There was also the traditional attitude that economic independence of parents denotes innate abilities for supervision in family day care. As a result, many communities merely

planned to assist parents in making independent placements, and vetoed any idea of shared responsibility between agency, parent, and foster parent.

Although the first established program emphasized the need for trained casework staff, this criterion has not been universally agreed upon by the social work profession. Rather it has tended to categorize family day care as a less vital service than those which seem to require more intensive treatment knowledge. The medical profession has assumed that to destroy typhoid bacillae and the inadequate sewerage systems that fostered such bacillae, was more important than to learn extensive methods for treatment of the disease. We in social work have yet to move ahead to the full recognition that prevention of insecurity and maladjustment in the young child must have our best skills—urgent psychiatric advice to that end notwithstanding! Instead, we still tend to give greater weight to treatment of severe maladjustments. We all agree this is most important. Where we disagree is on the equal importance of excellent supplementation of family life so that a child may develop a strong ego, the ability to love, and a sense of solidarity within a family group in order to move with maturity toward an awareness of his place in the community of mankind.

Today we come face to face with the child with "two mothers." Group day care workers recognize and must often deal with the conflicts and problems shown in children and parents whom they serve. Foster parents in family day care occupy a singularly unique place, and casework skill is of paramount importance in enabling them to function adequately as an important member of the team.

* Delivered at the Child Welfare League Section, National Conference of Social Work, Atlantic City, N. J., May 11, 1954.

Professionals active in family day care programs in the Eastern region of the United States have held discussion groups in 1954 in order to begin to compile some standards of practice. These were stimulating to those who are aware of sound casework practice. One area reviewed related to the supervision of family day care homes. The basic premise is that the parent of the child in family day care relinquishes none of his parental prerogatives. He has, however, asked the agency to provide a service for his child. The foster parent's responsibility is a delegated one.

The caseworker represents the agency. He enables the daily interaction between parents and child, foster parents, and the agency and acts as a guide to the participants. Because of the daily contact between foster parent and the child's own parent, there may be personality clashes which necessitate closer supervision and interpretation. Continued contact with the foster parent is necessary to pick up such a situation at the point of the problem. The caseworker, on the other hand, must accept the close, friendly relationship between foster parents and natural parents, being alert to the time to step into such a relationship, if the foster parent is taking on, or being burdened by, complicated problems needing skillful casework help.

The foster parent must be able to accept the inherent relationship of the child to its own parent, and yet be able to provide consistent handling in a relaxed, loving home atmosphere. The caseworker must provide the opportunity, and skillfully promote, the sharing by the foster parent of feelings about the various aspects of the job, understanding of child and parents, and any problems which may arise. The caseworker has a task to provide an opportunity to the foster parent for growth on the job by teaching new concepts and skills. There must be interpretation of rules and routines, depending on age and individual needs of the child, such as hours of care, number and kind of meals, payment for services, etc.

In cases of special medical or psychological problems, careful explanations are in order. Children with such needs are accepted in

family day care on a selective basis, dependent on careful medical and casework diagnosis. The caseworker must be responsible for pre-placement visits with mother and child—and for preparation for transfer to another, or termination of family day care placement. The child's adjustment potential into a given home, and a foster parent's ability to cope with his individual needs, necessitate careful study and evaluation. Since family day care service specializes in care for the young child, the caseworker needs expert knowledge of the developmental growth process of a child, and to be able to ascertain the foster parent's awareness here.

Establishing Fees

This brings us to a discussion of the controversial question of payment for such foster services. In a further attempt to set standards, a committee of professional workers arrived at the criteria for agency policy regarding fees.

The committee believed that money has psychological significance to every individual, and that it has special meaning to a client who asks for agency services. The payment of fees for family day care services helps to maintain for the individual a sense of responsibility and self respect. It belongs in the relationship that the applicant has with the agency. Therefore:

1. Fees should be based on a sliding scale according to income and size of family. They should be related to a standard of living scale, not necessarily minimum. Family day care should be available to all children who need it regardless of the economic status of their parents.
2. There should be a minimum and maximum fee—this latter to include administrative costs. Fees for intake consultation only might be valuable both to client and to agency, and should be based on a sliding scale.
3. Fees should be paid by parents to the agency. Essentially it is the agency that is giving service through foster parent personnel. The agency will maintain continued supervisory responsibility for the health and welfare of the child placed in the home.
4. The financial motive is often primary in foster home application in family day care. It is realistic and acceptable in the mature foster parent who

wishes to supplement the income in this way. Services given in the day care home should be adequately paid for, with extra payment if an individual child has special needs.

5. An agency assuming responsibility for a day care program assumes responsibility for payment of foster parents. This presupposes available financial resources to subsidize minimal parental fees when necessary.

Making the Board Representative

"Family day care service, like any form of care for children, is as good or as poor as the quality and scope of its program and the capabilities of its staff."¹ If we voice this concept with conviction, we must look first at the board of directors responsible for the program. We have tended to fall short in the day care field, in our efforts for adequate representation on our policy-making bodies. Standard lay participation is the combined efforts of men and women representing the religious, business, professional and racial groups of the community in equal partnership. A group of women from the best social strata of a community is a valuable asset to a program, but working alone they can neither be representative of the community of which they are a part nor can they adequately interpret an agency program.

The Board membership, comprised of men and women awakened to their responsibility to nurture the security of their community's children, should have cross-section representation. This includes mothers active in school and church affairs; business men including lawyers, insurance brokers, bankers and others; professionals such as ministers, pediatricians, dentists, psychologists, psychiatrists, and so on—persons from all religions and races served by the agency. Thus the board has the advantage of many points of view—from what constitutes adequate agency insurance coverage and proper application forms as seen by the lawyer, to what is an adequate medical program from the pediatrician's viewpoint, to the attitude of an

¹ Trout, Bessie E. and Bradbury, Dorothy E., *Mothers for a Day*, U. S. Children's Bureau, Washington, D. C., Number 318, 1946.

interested mother who knows her own child with his needs. This will result in strong leadership to the agency. We erroneously argued that men, for instance, are uninterested in day care programs, perhaps because we lacked belief in their value in leadership. The family day care executives need to make haste to sell their programs to the lay leadership and enlist the same strong backing from them that has advanced social welfare in other fields.

Professional Pioneering Possible

Again, administrators of family day care programs need to scrutinize their thinking about personnel. Sometimes rather lamely we have argued that this program is not as interesting as others to trained caseworkers. Yet here are all the elements of a satisfactory experience. In this field there are numerous pioneer steps still to be taken. The standards are in the making, and the skilled professional person can share in that process. A survey of family day care applications discloses a myriad of complicated family situations. The applicants are often not at the stage of insight regarding these to want other than the help they seek—family day care placement of their young child. Experienced workers long ago learned to start where the client is and to acquire more and more diagnostic skills in Intake in order to help the client to move ahead in his thought about his problem. This type of experience is available in family day care, with the added impetus that often we are being approached in time to stem a real familial breakdown. All such efforts immeasurably safeguard a child. So do the special skills used in sound foster home studies, not only to find adequate and loving supplementary adults to care for the child during the day, but to evaluate how best a particular home may be used. Can they care for a very young child or a toddler—or a partially handicapped child, physically or emotionally? Which will best serve the child is the pre-eminent thought, but following is the equally important question about wherein lies the best possibility of successful performance for the foster parent.

There are wide uses of skills in the supervision of the family day care home, as already described. The most delicate area of performance, however, doubtless comes in the subtle establishment of relationship with busy parents so they will use the period of day care placement as a constructive means to know more about their child—and themselves. There are, furthermore, the mature, resourceful parents, caught in a temporary crisis. Here the caseworker must be alert not to try to “discover” problems—no doubt requiring the greatest skill of all.

For the trained supervisor and administrator there is the virtually untrod road of adequate public interpretation; of adequate analysis of statistics showing heavy turnover, and fluctuating needs; of teaching the many skills already outlined; of discovering new methods to secure more and better day care homes; of zealously calling for more adequate board payment; of seeking untouched resources to provide subsidy to the very low income family so children may receive the benefits of day care placement, if needed. In the larger concept there are the important tasks of seeking recognition for teaching day care in schools of social work, and arranging stimulating field work placements in that area; for continued interpretation that family day care cannot fill the need for adequate ADC allowances, or homemaker services. For instance, perhaps homemaker service can quickly become a reality in more communities if administrators and boards of family day care programs requested joint participation to set them up. Perhaps family day care could analyze, and suggest ways to meet, the kind of homemaker service that should be available for the young child. All such uncharted paths for pioneering can, with conviction, be dynamically presented to the trained professional group.

A word more about one or two other areas still in the exploratory process. Recent agreement in the Eastern Regional Committee on Family Day Care set eight months as the minimum age for the acceptance of a child in this service. According to the best psychiatric advice, he may be old enough by then to

take on a new relationship in addition to the closer one with his mother. He may be expected physically to take the experience of going out in all kinds of weather. Feeding the older baby may be more pleasing to foster day care mothers than feeding the infant. Family day care is not the remedy for the recognized need of some parents to care for a child younger than eight months. Children under three years of age can be more effectively served in homes where they find a supplementary mother figure during their mother's absence. Our best psychiatric knowledge about child development indicates that children under three are not ready for the stimulation and competition of the group experience. Instead, they need a continuous and warm relationship to one person in order to be emotionally sustained and find security.

This service is related further to the needs of children over three who may need individualized care because of their own problems, the family situation, and the placement needs of siblings. Experience in family day care has taught us that it is impractical from the parents' point of view to serve families who wish to place three or more pre-school children, and it is not financially feasible for the agency. It is important for boards and staffs of day care agencies to work together to help such families. The community must face the need for homemaker services, more adequate relief and A.D.C. grants, more available full-time boarding home care when very young children face separation from parents. The family day care program should act cooperatively with other family and child care agencies to offer skilled intake services through which families may find solutions for their problems which make placement unnecessary.

Caseloads and Per Capita Costs

The question of size of the family day care workers' caseloads is still in the process of study as is the range of service given by each caseworker. Some agencies assign a worker to a specific area, and that worker handles all phases of the work for the given area—In-

take for applicants and foster homes; study of foster homes; placement and supervision of child and foster home; continued contact with parents on the casework level appropriate to the problems involved. Other agencies have separate homefinders and Intake workers.

There is also the 64 dollar question that always raises its head, at least during Chest budget hearings—namely, per capita costs. Day care committees and agency surveys note that family day care costs are approximate to those of a good standard group care program. In addition, there is a real problem about the method of arrival at per capita cost figures. In the First Family Day Care Association report of 1952-53, 158 children received 15,744 actual days of care in foster homes. This figure divided into the total budget gave per capita cost of \$3.33 per day. Yet 2,192 casework interviews were held that year, many of which served children never placed in a day care home. Other casework agencies give consideration to such activity. Should not the actual casework interviews be added to actual days of care for a more realistic arrival at per capita costs? This matter is under advisement but as yet, unanswered. It also relates to statistical count of actual children served.

Family Day Care as Separate Agency

Let us move now to a brief analysis of the specialized family day care service under separate agency auspices. The First Family Day Care Association of Philadelphia reviewed its work in 1937-10 years after its inception. This review was markedly foresighted, and included many early statements about concepts being discussed today. The review noted that family day care "developed as an independent project probably [meant] greater expense in the early years. . . . However, it is unmistakably true that complete independence of organization means greater freedom to blaze new trails as the need arises."¹ This is an important point for

consideration in view of the many still unsettled aspects of the program. A board of directors in a single agency can give its entire attention to standard-building. This includes its own proper make-up as previously outlined, and its own intensive efforts in interpretation of well-established policies inherent in any skilled professional program. In regard to professional staff, it is still important to build up a body of knowledge based on skilled performance in family day care. Standards are just now being compiled; new methods of work, of recording, of development of special skills are yet to be crystallized. Administrators of experience from other child welfare and family services are being recruited to re-evaluate the program content. All of this work can be accomplished more readily if the entire time can be focused on the family day care program. There is need to "catch up" with progress in those fields of social work where patterns have been established through long years of experience. The separate family day care agency, aware that it must offer skilled intake service, can be another catalyst in the community of agencies. Evaluation of first and second requests for family day care placement can pose the question, "Is day care the service that will be in the best interest and welfare of the child?"

Often the staff in a full-time foster placement agency or the institution grapples with extremely complicated situations that have been in and out of day care agencies for years. Some re-evaluation of the problems at that time, with the cooperative thinking of skilled staff in other type agencies, might have thrown protection around the child—or prevented a marital breakdown—by agreed upon referral elsewhere. Many such cases are found to be actively known from time to time to five or six other agencies. The family day care service scrutiny at Intake can integrate such information as shared by each agency, and, since the parents are then requesting day care, follow through with plans other than placement. It is valuable for all such previously active agencies to share in the decision. Otherwise, each may reopen and close a case a number of times, without constructive help to the child.

When all agencies are in agreement as to the next step the concentrated group can continue to steer the parent to the one agency

¹ Kenney, Luna E., *A Ten Year Experiment in Foster Day Care*, Child Welfare League of America, Inc., New York, 1939. Bulletin Number 15.

best suited to meet the need. One such case, involving five agencies, was discussed in a joint conference recently called by the First Family Day Care Association. All agreed our service was not the answer, but referral to the protective agency was. At the close of the conference one agency representative remarked "Just such a conference should have been called two years ago." Such efforts are time-consuming as initiated, but what is the ratio of that time spent as against years of varied agency activity? And the larger question—what about the best interests of the child?

Alternative Plans

It is accepted that there are several potential methods of providing family day care, besides that of a separate specialized agency. It may be developed as a branch of an existing child-placing agency of high standards. There is the danger, in view of the fact that family day care is still in its formative years, that it may become the step-child of a larger and better established service, and languish accordingly—or the essential differences and similarities in the two foster placement processes may not be fully understood. There may be advantages to such a set-up. Another potential method of organization could be joint establishment with other day care programs. However,

"experience in the field of casework has shown fairly consistently that rarely can a worker carry multiple functions and do a creative job in each of them. . . . One of the methods of discovering new truths concerning needs and the meeting of needs is through cumulative experience. . . . Programs in which there has not been the full concentration of a professionally-trained staff, have lacked depth, and few constructive methods in giving the service have developed."

This quotation from the Children's Bureau pamphlet, *Mothers For A Day*, perhaps aptly sums up what needs still to be done in order to adequately understand and meet the needs of the child with "two mothers." It may also be the best statement for the continuation of as many family day care programs as possible under separate auspices. Whatever auspices sponsor the program, the facts remain that this service is becoming important in social welfare because of community demands. Dynamic participation by all those in the social work field who strive for the best for children is needed to achieve the goals which we are slowly and painstakingly advancing toward with our accumulative experience of the past twenty-seven years.

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

Hidden Talent

PERHAPS the greatest enigma in the field of child welfare is the reluctance to write, to put into words our daily living experiences, and to uncover our convictions for the world to see. A still greater problem is that hesitation which accompanies and so frequently discourages the fine impulse to write. None of this would be a problem if we were bereft of convictions or lacking in a creative practice. The reasons, then, must lie in our feelings about writing itself—reasons above and beyond the rugged fact that the secret of all good writing is hard work.

In search of an explanation, certain familiar questions are likely to come to mind. Do I have anything new to say? Who would wish to hear what I do have to say? Can I really put my questions, my thoughts and even my criticisms into acceptable language? Am I experienced enough to try my hand at this? Do I have the confidence to write? Is it dangerous to reveal myself in this way? Running through such questions is the red thread of apology, of lack of confidence, of fear, and of guilt-colored feelings all so frequently unjustified when weighed against the growth of a profession and the achievements of practice. The hurry of our professional expectations races ahead of our professional accomplishments, leaving the written word unsaid. This state of affairs has settled upon us slowly, for by tradition child welfare is a field, bold in practice, rich in ideas and courageous in experimentation. It would be a professional achievement in 1955 to recapture this traditional boldness so as to produce for CHILD WELFARE more articles and written works and by so doing to overcome not only the reluctance to write but the obstacles behind the reluctance.

To be effective and publishable, articles do not have to contain brand new ideas. Most good writing leans on old truths, even forgotten ones. To be convincing, articles do not have to make use of the latest technical terms and vocabulary. The greatest professional writing is endowed with simplicity and homespun clarity of expression. To bring a

message the writer does not have to be the executive or the case supervisor. Every good administrator and supervisor wants his staff members to express their own ideas and, whenever possible, to do this in written form. The caseworker on the front line of practice often has a fresh point of view about his work or about an agency policy which has now outgrown its usefulness. The Board Member and volunteer can bring a community perspective so needed by the professional who without this is likely to become lost in his own professional secrets.

It is not new or original to say that behind the reluctance to write is the fear of showing one's thoughts in public with the attendant fear of possible criticism. In my opinion this is a highly unreasonable fear, one which leaves no room for the truth that without criticism, fairly given, no one grows. Thus, to write is to risk a little of oneself. Sometimes a person sets higher standards of writing for himself than the profession itself demands. He forgets that writing in any field of endeavor grows out of its imperfections in practice. He overlooks the fact that child welfare is a very human activity with its private history of mistakes. Forgotten also is the truth that the vital written word always reflects change, growth, disappointments, and that real professional accomplishment is not divorced from such homely human things.

Good writing always has something to say. Subject matter for writing in child welfare still awaits our development like an undiscovered gold mine. The need for all kinds of articles on practice in its many colored forms and settings is great. Articles on administration, on supervision, on relations with the community around us all cry out for expression. Every day we deal with some of the most dramatic of events in the lives of children and of their mothers and fathers. We come face to face with these in all of their unacademic realism. Do we get so used to such realism that we no longer see its professional significance?

To write a little is to give much of ourselves, of our experiences, of our thoughts and convictions. Perhaps the greatest reward

is that which comes from the act of self-expression itself. We have been hoarding our precious thoughts and secrets. This ironically acts as a boomerang. We need more faith and trust in ourselves and in our ability to say what we mean with clearness, simplicity and sincere conviction. Doubt about one's writing talent is a salutary thing as long as this doubt does not block the endeavor itself. As Shakespeare said:

"Our doubts are traitors
And make us lose the good we oft might win
By fearing to attempt."

—DOROTHY HUTCHINSON
Advisory Committee on Publications

SURVEY DEPARTMENT

Earl J. Beatt of Minneapolis will join the staff of the League on February 1 as Director of Surveys. John E. Dula, Executive Director of the Westchester County Council last held this position.

Mr. Beatt comes to the League with a rich background in child welfare and community organization. He is a graduate of the University of Minnesota Graduate School of Social Work. For the past three years, he has been Director of the Family and Child Division of the Minneapolis Council of Social Agencies. During the five years preceding this he was caseworker and casework supervisor at the Family and Children's Services of Minneapolis and Ryther Child Center of Seattle. He has conducted many surveys in family and child welfare.

The Survey Department of the League is a wholly self-supporting department. It conducts surveys, studies and consultations on all phases of the operation of individual agencies, groups of agencies and communities.

These services are available on a cost basis to any agency or community. Further information may be obtained by writing to the League.

Southern Regional Conference

February 24, 25, 26
Francis Marion Hotel, Charleston, South Carolina
Chairman: Mr. Everett Spell, Director
Oak Grove
North Charleston, South Carolina

A BOARD MEMBER SPEAKS

Deduction for Child Care Expenses Under the 1954 Internal Revenue Code

THE PROVISION in the 1954 Internal Revenue Code for deduction for expenses paid for the care of certain dependents aside from its obvious effects has interesting sociological implications. The provisions of the law (Sec. 214 I.R.C. of 1954) are relatively simple though, in view of past experience with the tax laws, this may prove to be the understatement of the new year.

Briefly, a new and additional deduction is allowed—up to a maximum of \$600 per year for money *actually spent* during the taxable year to care for dependents (defined as a child—i.e. son, daughter or stepchild under twelve years of age or any person who is physically or mentally incapable of caring for himself).

In addition to the maximum quantitative limitation of \$600 per year, the deduction is limited to a woman or widower (defined as a man whose wife has died and who has not remarried, or as a man living apart from his wife because of a decree of divorce or separation) and is available only if the care is for the purpose of enabling the taxpayer to be gainfully employed. A working wife is entitled to the deduction only if she (a) files a joint return with her husband and (b) if their combined joint adjusted gross income does not exceed \$4,500. If the adjusted gross income does exceed \$4,500, the allowance is reduced by the amount by which the adjusted gross income exceeds \$4,500. In other words, if the gross income is \$5,100 per year, the deduction may not be taken at all—if the joint income is \$4,800 the limit is \$300, and so forth.

This is the law, and what remains is but "commentary" drawn from the Committee reports and the suggestions of others who have given the section more than mere passing consideration.

First, the provision is brand new, and since the prior case law was entirely consistent in disallowing such deduction under any prior legislation, it must be accepted as a deliberate change in favor of the deduction.

Second, the deduction is limited to the dollars actually *spent* during the taxable year—up to a maximum of \$600. If only \$500 or \$400 is spent, the deduction is limited to such amount *actually spent*. The language is "expenses paid" and this would seem to exclude any indebtedness *incurred* but not *paid* during the taxable year.

Third, the funds spent may not have been paid to anyone for whom a taxpayer is allowed a dependency deduction—i.e. no deduction for paying one child or anyone in a dependent status to taxpayer (mother, etc.) to care for other children.

Fourth, only dollars spent for care to permit the taxpayer to be gainfully employed or while the taxpayer is in active search of gainful employment, may be deducted. So, if a widow places a child in a nursery school at \$50 per month and is employed for only two months, the deduction will be limited to \$100, or if she is employed but two weeks in each of three months, she could deduct only that proportion of the dollars spent allocable to the periods when she was working; or if the nursery is an all day nursery and the mother works but half days, only the nursery school time allocable to the working day will be deductible.

Fifth, if a housekeeper or servant is employed to do housework and look after children, an allocation of the time will be made between the two types of work and the deduction will be limited to the amount allocable to child or dependent care.

Sixth, only those expenses are allowed which are incurred prior to the time the child reaches the age of twelve, i.e. if the child becomes thirteen on July 1st, only expenses incurred prior to July 1st will qualify. Apparently, so long as such expenses are paid during the taxable year, they need only have been *incurred* prior to July 1st. Presumably the same allocation would occur if the dependent is not a child, but is physically or mentally incapable during only a portion of the year.

Seventh, apparently no allocation between children will be made—i.e. if a nurse looks after two children—one aged nine and one aged thirteen, the full expenses paid (subject to the other limitations) will be allowed.

It is obvious that the deduction is a narrow one and is intended to be rather strictly construed—even to the point of allocating days and parts of days and dividing functions which are rarely considered separately. But clearly this is because the deduction was passed for the benefit of a specific group and the Congress was anxious to avoid creating a new loophole.

The sociological implications are emphasized when it is recognized that the Government anticipates that this very narrow deduction will cost the Government \$130,000,000 in lost revenues!

If child care at the rate of but \$600 per year amounts to \$130,000,000 per year, one can imagine what the total cost of child care necessary to enable persons to be gainfully employed must really amount to.

However, what makes the problem even more interesting to child welfare workers becomes obvious when one stops to consider how little child care can be obtained for \$600 per year. Either those who have to work to support their children or dependents must continue to carry most of the burden themselves—though helped to the extent of \$600 per year—or ways must be found to provide full care within the \$600 limit.

The price of adequate care within the child's own home can never be brought within this limit—even in the sections of the country where this type of domestic service is available at a comparatively low price. But perhaps day care centers and foster family day care homes can give adequate service at such a price. It would appear, therefore, that the creation of day care centers and foster family day care programs should be given additional impetus by this new legislation.

The deduction is a welcome recognition of what has been a fact of modern industrial life. It should be helpful as far as it goes. But it is hoped that the Bureau and the Courts will be liberal within the limits allowed, and that the taxpayers will cooperate with the spirit as well as the letter of the law. Child Welfare Agencies can be most helpful in advising their clients of the provisions and applicability of the law, and in anticipating the effect on the resources of their clients and their community.

JOSEPH F. HAAS

Board Member, Child Welfare League of America, Inc.

NEWS FROM THE FIELD

In Defense of Social Workers

By ALBERT B. SOUTHWICK of The Telegram
Editorial Staff

Editor's Note: Clients and social workers alike owe a vote of thanks to Mr. Southwick for his clear interpretation of the social worker, written as a response to Miss Pearl Buck and reprinted with permission of the Worcester Telegram, Worcester, Massachusetts.

Do you believe that the doctors of today are greedy specialists, lacking the devotion and understanding that marked the general practitioner of a generation ago?

Do you also believe that the average social worker is a businesslike, nine-to-five professional, lacking human feeling and understanding?

Both these points of view are given eloquent expression in an article by Pearl Buck in the November issue of the Atlantic Monthly. "The modern lay mind," she writes, "is secretly troubled by the rise of power of the professional over our lives." Looking back fondly to the faithful old family doctor, she comments that people believed and trusted him "as they do not today believe the doctor or the psychiatrist, separately or in combination, although the skills in both these professions have developed enormously."

As for the social workers, especially those in child adoption, Miss Buck thinks they have become too "professional." She inveighs against the "fearful lag" in the average adoptive agency and she blasts the "red tape," "bureaucracy," and the "vested interest" attitudes that have grown up.

I believe that Miss Buck's criticism of the medical profession is, at best, only a half truth. I think that her comments on social workers are 95 per cent false. And I wish to enter a defense of this latter, misunderstood group.

The Loving Heart

I have become acquainted with a number of social workers during the past few years. I have yet to meet one who holds that "the

loving heart is the one possession which the professional is taught to avoid . . ." as Miss Buck puts it. I do not believe that "the profession is becoming a hiding place for small people, too timid to break petty rules and come out for the great principles of child life."

Nor do I think that social workers are "for the most part too conscientious, too careful, too critical—and too self conscious." And, so far as I know the facts, social work in general is not hidebound by the stupid red tape, restrictions, and lack of imagination and courage that Miss Buck describes.

Miss Buck's basic argument is that social workers have sacrificed sympathy and understanding for the professional point of view. "A professional social worker must be 'detached,'" she observes bitterly. "And this is the basic stupidity, for how can one have the right to care for children and place their destinies if one is 'detached'. . . . Emotional clinging to a child is, we are told, the great sin. The professional must act like God, who pours down rain upon the just and the unjust with equal indifference."

Something very fundamental is involved here. Very few social workers—none that I know—have any illusion that they are acting "like God" when they try to decide the tough and complex emotional problems of the people they are helping. As anyone else would be, they are deeply affected by the personal tragedies that they encounter. But long experience has taught them the danger of becoming emotionally involved with their clients. Nearly any problem they encounter, whether it be a marital conflict, an unmarried mother, cruelty to children, or whatever, has two sides. The chief service that a social worker can render to a client in trouble is counsel that derives from clear, calm judgment.

No doubt this attitude does cause some misunderstanding. Many clients prefer sympathy and comfort to an accurate analysis of their predicament. They do not like to face the facts. They resent it when the true picture is presented—and they take out this resentment against the social worker and the agency. The Red Cross is particularly vulnerable to this sort of reaction. Its attempts

to set up accurate and just standards of help are almost always misinterpreted.

Clarity of mind, unswayed by emotional partisanship, is the key to good social work. But this clarity of mind—this "professional attitude" as Miss Buck calls it, does not preclude sympathetic understanding.

Sympathy and Humanity

It is on this point that Miss Buck's argument breaks down. Granted that there are some poor social workers. Granted even that some social workers get too engrossed in the theory and jargon of sociology and psychology. The fact remains that most modern social workers have been well trained for the difficult job they have to do and that they approach it in the right spirit of sympathy and humanity—and humility.

Toward the end of her article, Miss Buck does make a concession that partly refutes the rest of her thesis. "In our industrialized culture," she says, "the professional mind is a necessity. . . . In so complex a society as ours, which is in itself the product of professional science, the lay person is at the mercy of the professional, from the plumber who comes to fix the kitchen sink to the psychiatrist who tries to cure the schizophrenic adolescent . . ."

And then she adds: "What the lay mind needs today is the professional mind that he can trust. He wants to believe in his specialists. He wants to have the inspiring faith that they are devoted to mankind through him, that they are honest and just plain good, in the ways in which he understands goodness."

No one can take exception to that. The point I wish to make is that the "lay mind" can right now repose that trust in the great majority of social workers.

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The American Orthopsychiatric Association 32nd Annual Meeting at the Hotel Sherman, Chicago, Ill., on February 28—March 2, features all-day sections on Childhood Schizophrenia, Child Development and Psychotherapy with Children, plus approximately 100 scientific papers.

Procedures for Inter-country Adoptions

From a memorandum by Mildred Arnold of the U. S. Children's Bureau to administrators of state public welfare agencies and directors of child welfare, November 26, 1954.

1. The couple interested in sponsoring a child from overseas first seeks the services of an agency licensed or authorized under State law to place children in adoption.
2. The agency explores with the applicants what it means to adopt a child and especially one from another country.
3. The local agency seeks the cooperation of the appropriate recognized national voluntary agency on behalf of the applicants and sends to that agency the available information and results of the preliminary contact with the couple.
4. If a child is to be located, the national agency through its overseas representative takes the necessary steps to locate and study one or more children eligible for emigration and adoption by this couple; or when the child is known to the couple, obtains the social study of the child.
5. Some local agencies prefer to do the complete study of the adoptive home before enlisting the cooperation of the national agency. Where this is not practical, they complete the home study after the social study of the child is received from overseas.
6. The applicants now make their decision to adopt the child. Assurance forms DSR-5, obtained directly from the Visa Office, Department of State, or through the national voluntary agency, are executed by the applicants and endorsed by either the state, local, or national voluntary agency, depending upon the agreement between these agencies.
7. The original and 2 copies of DSR-5 are sent by or through the national voluntary agency to the Visa Office, Department of State.
8. The Visa Office sends verified copies of the assurance to the American consular office overseas where the application for a non-quota visa is made. The State Department notifies the endorsing agency who informs adoptive parents and interested agencies.
9. The local agency may enlist the cooperation of the national voluntary agency in arranging for the child's travel.
10. The local agency supervises the child in the adoptive home.
11. The local agency forwards a copy of the adoption decree to the national voluntary agency.

Miss Arnold observes that these are suggested procedures because "there must be flexibility in providing the necessary safeguards in inter-country adoptions."

READERS' FORUM

Independent Boarding Homes

Editor's Note: *In the past several years, members of the League have expressed considerable concern about how the large numbers of children in independent boarding homes can be protected. This is an invitation to our readers to use this Forum to bring their findings and experiences with this problem to a larger audience. By way of sparking the discussion, we are presenting the following brief report on the findings of a survey of independent homes made in Akron, Ohio.*

Akron, Ohio has studied its independent boarding homes and reported in a newspaper release its concern about what happens to the children in these homes. For example, of a group of 41 children, only five had remained in the same home during the three months when the check was being made. The remaining 36 were moved twice or more during this period.

Licensing the homes which parents find for their children and which they supervise independently of any social agency has been one of the measures used in various states for controlling this traffic in children which often cripples them emotionally. As one observant boarding mother put it, to quote the newspaper release, "I can't do anything for him, all he does is sit on the steps and wait for his parents."

Some of the boarding parents may have the best intentions, often they are helpless in the face of a parent who may move a child because she learns of another home which charges a lower fee.

Others who make a business of caring for children board them in such numbers that they cannot possibly give them the personal attention they should have.

These parents, the report points out, do not know what they are doing to their children. This independent condition can be found all over the country. The problem calls for services which truly fall in the category of Protection. More concerted action seems called for. Surely efforts to prevent the serious damage to these children cannot be looked at as interfering with the rights of parents to do their own planning.

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BOOK NOTE

Group Work in the Institution: A Modern Challenge, Gisela Konopka. Wm. Morrow & Company, New York, 1954. 304 pp. \$4.50.

Gisela Konopka, Associate Professor of Group Work, University of Minnesota School of Social Work, makes a double-edged contribution with her newest book, *Group Work in the Institution—A Modern Challenge*. The book has meaning both for all those persons working in the institutional field and for the group workers who practice in the more traditional settings of settlement house, community center, or national program agency.

It lends to those concerned with institutional living, from the administrator through the total professional team, some specific, new information about the place of the group worker as a new adjunct to the staff and the value of the group work method as part of the helping process that makes for improved institutional care. Based upon Mrs. Konopka's wide experience with various institutions, the book offers a carefully charted, simply described, human account of professional service. It is for the administrator who is eager to innovate and develop the work of his agency in light of new trends and insights. It is for psychiatrists, caseworkers, psychologists, teachers, and all working presently in institutions who wish to learn what another profession can contribute to their concerted approach to the resident in their charge. It is for the group worker, himself, who wants to use his training in a new setting which may be the most needful of his deepest, clearest professional skill and who is, at the same time, tentative about accepting what he has to offer.

Here is a book rooted in practice as it is now performed both in this country and abroad. It is chocked full of vivid examples of group work in action that speak eloquently for its value and that reflect Mrs. Konopka's own deep conviction, concern for people, and dedication to the "science and art" of social group work.

The institutional houseparent will be helped by the specific discussions on such pressing

subjects as the resolving of group conflicts or the section dealing with discipline. At the same time, there is much that can help group workers generally. The supervision and use of volunteers along with the illustrative recorded material, for example, has rarely been described more clearly. The relationship between responsible use of volunteers and constructive interpretation of the work of the agency to the larger community applies equally to all social agencies. The impact of group work in short-term contacts such as the work described in the institutions for unmarried mothers or the time-limited discussions with delinquents preparing to leave a training school, reinforces a growing recognition of these possibilities for the field as a whole. The specific suggestions concerning record keeping in children's institutions could be useful to summer camps and other agencies with long work weeks that want to improve practice through systematic recording, but where some short cuts are needed. Rich recorded material runs throughout the book illustrating the group worker's various objectives in many situations. The records point up concisely how the worker helps the group members develop and change through their group experience by his skillful, disciplined use of himself, his use of program activities, and his help with interpersonal relationships. The reader will come to see the difference between group work and recreation and to see the place of each in the institution.

So far as the content is concerned, the book begins with a history of the development and place of institutions in modern society followed by a description of group work and what goes into the training of a worker. After discussing what she feels to be the major functions of group workers in all institutions, Mrs. Konopka then describes life and work in different kinds of institutions, pointing up throughout how each special setting necessitates certain emphases among the over-all jobs of the group worker. The reader who expects the group worker's only job to be direct group leadership will be

interested to note that this might be of secondary importance to the supervision of the houseparent in the children's institution, or the supervision of volunteers, or working with parents of the delinquent or handicapped child. Greatest detail is given to the children's institution and detention homes for juvenile delinquents. Chapters also deal with work with unmarried mothers, handicapped children, adult prisoners, and the aged.

At the outset Mrs. Konopka states

"one major form of institutions for adults, the hospitals for mentally sick persons, will require a more detailed study of the specific problems of seriously disturbed people."

The lack of some interim reviewing of the work with this large segment of institutionalized persons is disappointing to this reviewer in view of the fact that more group work has been tested in this setting than most others. As with all "firsts" refinements will come with time, with more experience and testing, and with the benefit of the contribution of this and other "pioneer" efforts. Perhaps, this important group work "first" suffers because it is addressed to a too large audience. While some material is directed to the houseparent, for example, a nearby section discusses how the supervising group worker might work to allay the fears and insecurities of the houseparent and also what factors contribute to the selection of these persons.

This reviewer also feels that there are some inconsistencies in the way Mrs. Konopka expresses the philosophic base of this book. At points the following quotation typifies this author's belief:

"The final purpose of any work with people, whether they are healthy or sick, young or old, is to help them use as many of their capacities as possible so that they are themselves happy and can contribute to society as a whole."

And yet running throughout also is emphasis on diagnosis and "repair work" that seem to suggest a questionable degree of the worker's control of the situation.

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Above all, however, *Group Work in the Institution* sounds a note of optimism and hope for a field which is desirous of progress and improvement. Therein are specific aids that will help with the "mental hygiene climate" of the group living situation, so crucial to the well-being of the resident. In this field where tensions develop because people live close together, work long hours, and have behavior problems, there is need

for concern not only for the happiness of the child or adult, but also for the worker. The sympathetic understanding of the institution, its problems, its personnel shines through this book making it a practical valuable sourcebook.

RUTH R. MIDDLEMAN

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Caseworker with children in placement. Salary range \$3800-\$6200. Appointment salary depends on experience. Master's degree. Psychiatric consultation; Social Security, retirement; advanced personnel practices. Write Harold Silver, Jewish Social Service Bureau, 13327 Linwood, Detroit 38, Mich.

CASEWORKER (1) male, for parent-child guidance service, involving treatment for emotionally disturbed boys, ages 6-18, and their parents. Consulting psychiatrist and psychologist available. Masters degree in social work, plus experience in counseling with children and parents preferred. Salary range \$3862-\$4938. Social Security, National Health and Welfare Retirement. Agency provides hospital and medical plan. Qualified applicants contact Milton L. Goldberg, Executive Director, Jewish Big Brothers, 590 N. Vermont Ave., Los Angeles 4, Cal.

CASEWORKERS. Two workers convinced that there is no discrepancy between the professional approach and Catholic principles of Charity desired. Immediate openings. Family and child welfare agency in city of 500,000. East shore of San Francisco Bay. Professional staff of 10. Qualified supervision. Psychiatric consultation. Caseload 40. Salary to \$4980. Catholic Social Service, Thayer Bldg., 577-14th St., Oakland 12, Cal.

CHILD WELFARE WORKERS: Immediate openings for child welfare workers with one year of graduate study. Salary range \$3276-\$3792. Write Merit System Council, State Office Bldg., Phoenix, Ariz.

RESIDENTIAL CASEWORKER in treatment oriented program in home for delinquent and predelinquent boys at Boys Town of Missouri, private auspices. Married, male. Two years social work education. Live in nearby town. Psychiatric consultant will provide casework supervision. Starting salary \$4320. Increase in six months. Write J. C. Neagles, St. James, Mo.

CASEWORKER, Catholic, professionally trained for progressive family & child welfare agency. 20 miles south of San Francisco. Salary \$3780-\$4704, can appoint at \$4704. Social Security & retirement benefits. 1 month vacation. Good supervision and psychiatric consultation. Apply Catholic Social Service, 112 N. San Mateo Dr., San Mateo, Cal.

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA. Professionally qualified caseworker in large multiple-service private agency with high standards of service, supervision and personnel practices, psychiatric consultation; agency is field placement for students (University of California School of Social Welfare). Opportunity for advancement. Salary to \$4362, depending on experience. Write Executive Director, Catholic Social Service, 1825 Mission St., San Francisco, Cal.

CHILD PLACEMENT WORKERS for Eastern Connecticut Office located in New London and Litchfield County Office located in Torrington. Master's degree in social work, experience preferred. Salary \$3200-\$4700, depending on experience. Write to C. Rollin Zane, Executive Director, Children's Services of Connecticut, 1680 Albany Ave., Hartford 5, Conn.

CHILD WELFARE WORKERS for CWLA agency. Full professional training with experience substitution possible. Salary range \$3216-\$4392. Progressive personnel policies and expanding program; foster home placement, adoptions, relinquishment, counseling, protective services, etc. Fully qualified supervision and psychiatric consultation; psychological service. Write Personnel Officer, Denver Department of Welfare, 777 Cherokee St., Denver, Colo.

HOUSEMOTHER, complete maintenance in agency-furnished residence in Chicago with privacy, maid service, etc. Salary in addition—range: \$150-\$220 per month. Superior working conditions as house-parents for group of 6-8 emotionally disturbed children. Husband expected to continue with outside employment. Training and/or experience in work with children desirable. Write: Morris H. Price, Assistant Director, Jewish Children's Bureau, 231 S. Wells St., Chicago 4, Ill.

CASEWORKER, trained. Multiple-function agency, member CWLA and FSAA. Retirement plan and Social Security. Salary dependent on training and experience. Excellent personnel practices. Write Luna E. Kenney, Family and Children's Service, 313 S. E. Second, Evansville, Ind.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, Indianapolis Day Nursery Association. Two nursery centers, one large, one small. Requirements: Master's degree in early childhood education or social work plus substantial experience, preferably in day care agency. Salary \$4500-\$5500, dependent on qualifications. Staff includes supervising teacher, caseworker, nurse, nutritionist, head teachers, assistant teachers, clerical and maintenance people. Write H. W. Wisely, Chairman Personnel Committee, Day Nursery Association, 542 Lockerbie St., Indianapolis 2, Ind.

CASEWORKER II or III in multiple-function agency. Requirements: Master's degree in social work, plus minimum two years' experience; qualified supervision and opportunity for advancement. Beginning salary \$3800 upward, commensurate with experience. Family and Children's Service of Fort Wayne, Inc., 419 E. Main St., Fort Wayne, Ind.

CASEWORKER, female, wanted for branch office position in statewide Lutheran child care and child-placing agency. Diversified caseload of children in boarding and adoptive homes and unmarried mothers. Excellent community relationships, skilled supervision and opportunity for advancement. Qualifications: MA in social work or 1 yr. training plus experience; salary range, \$3500-\$4500. Lutheran Welfare Society of Iowa, 2302 University Ave., Des Moines, Iowa.

CASEWORK SUPERVISOR for private children's agency. Experience in supervision necessary. Psychiatric consultation. Retirement fund and Social Security. Write Executive Secretary, Children's Agency, 320 E. Gray St., Louisville 2, Ky.

CASEWORKER II—Graduate accredited school of social work experienced in making adoption studies. Opening in private, nonsectarian agency immediately for adoption worker. Other agency services include foster care, services to unmarried mothers and casework with children in institution. Excellent supervision, psychiatric consultation, small caseloads, good personnel practices. Social Security and National Retirement plan. Member CWLA. Setting provides opportunity for furthering professional growth. Salary \$3640-\$4200. Children's Bureau, Room 502, 211 Camp St., New Orleans 12, La.

DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICE—Vacancy in girls training school near Baltimore, Maryland. Requires two years of graduate study in social work. Four years of acceptable social work experience involving two years of consultant, supervisory or teaching responsibility and one year of experience with children separated from home. Starting salary \$4013 per year with good opportunities for advancement. Contact the Commissioner of Personnel, 31 Light St., Baltimore 2, Md. before February 26.

COUNTY EXECUTIVE for Talbot Branch in Easton. Opening June 1, 1955. Private, nonsectarian agency providing adoption, short-term foster care, protective service and service to children in their own homes. Salary \$4,400-\$5,100. Professional training and child placement experience required. Write Miss E. Elizabeth Glover, Executive Director, Maryland Children's Aid Society, Inc., 2133 Maryland Ave., Baltimore 18, Md.

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CASEWORKERS, multiple - function agency. Graduates of accredited school of social work. Good personnel practices. Salary: \$3300-\$4050, depending on experience. Family and Children's Society, 204 W. Lanvale St., Baltimore 17, Md.

FAMILY CASEWORKER for Fairfield County Office offering child placement and family service. Requirements: Master's degree in social work, experience preferred. Salary \$3200-\$4700, depending on experience. Write to C. Rollin Zane, Executive Director, Children's Services of Connecticut, 1680 Albany Ave., Hartford 5, Conn.

ADOPTION WORKER, Hartford Office, carrying statewide adoption service, for late spring. Requirements, Master's degree in social work, experience preferred. Salary \$3200-\$4700, depending on experience. Write to C. Rollin Zane, Executive Director, Children's Services of Connecticut, 1680 Albany Ave., Hartford 5, Conn.

CASEWORKERS—Qualified Catholic caseworkers for family, unmarried mother and adoption service. Vacancies due to program expansion. Social Security, retirement, attractive personnel practices. Salary \$3800-\$4700. Beginning salary commensurate with experience. Opportunities for advancement. Write Rev. Wilbur F. Suedkamp, Acting Director, Catholic Family Center, 305 Michigan, Detroit 26, Mich.